

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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O R 261807Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 450

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2738

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: FIVE PERSONS KILLED AND TWO WOUNDED IN UNC-ARMY CONFRONTATION

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 2530, 2609, 2385, 2195

BEGIN SUMMARY: FOUR CAMPESINOS AND ONE SOLDIER WERE KILLED AND TWO CAMPESINOS WOUNDED IN A UNC-MILITARY CLASH IN JUTICALPA, OLANCHO. THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNC (NATIONAL UNION OF CAMPESINOS) HAVE BOTH ISSUED COMMUNIQUES TO SUPPORT THEIR OWN ACTIONS. THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE

COUNCIL IS NOW CONFRONTED WITH THE PROBLEM IT MOST FEARED, THAT IS, A CONFRONTATION WITH THE CAMPESINOS. THE INTERNAL DIVISIONS WITHIN THE COUNCIL WILL PROBABLY BECOME CLEARER AS THEY GRAPPLE WITH THE VARIOUS WAYS OF DEALING WITH THE SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. A COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS OF THE CHIEF OF STATE ON JUNE 25. ITS MAIN POINTS FOLLOW:

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A. A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN ARMY SOLDIERS AND CAMPESINOS

BELONGING TO UNC TOOK PLACE IN JUTICALPA, OLANCHO AT 10:00 A.M. ON JUNE 25. THE CONFRONTATION RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF FIVE PEOPLE AND THE WOUNDING OF TWO MORE;

B. THE CONFRONTATION TOOK PLACE AS A RESULT OF SHOTS BEING FIRED FROM UNC HEADQUARTERS IN JUTICALPA INTO A DEMONSTRATION OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS;

C. A PLATOON WAS SENT TO THE SCENE TO RESTORE ORDER BUT WHEN THE COMMANDER APPROACHED THE UNC BUILDING, WAS FIRED ON AND ONE OF HIS COMPANIONS WAS KILLED;

D. THE ARMY FORCE RETURNED THE FIRE, KILLED FOUR PEOPLE, WOUNDED TWO OTHERS AND OCCUPIED UNC HEADQUARTERS;

E. THE GOH AND THE ARMED FORCES DEPLORE THE LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE AND POINT OUT THAT IT IS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE UNREST CREATED BY UNC BY INITIATING A MARCH ON TEGUCIGALPA TO FORCE THE GOVERNMENT TO ADOPT MEASURES NOT IN CONFORMITY WITH THE LAW;

F. THE MARCH IS ONLY ONE OF A SERIES OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY UNC IN DEFIANCE OF LAW AND ORDER;

G. THE GOVERNMENT IS DEDICATED TO RESOLVING NATIONAL PROBLEMS BUT LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE LAW, MOCKERY OF AUTHORITY AND SUBVERSION OF PUBLIC ORDER BENEFITS NO ONE AND PUSHES THE COUNTRY TOWARD CHAOS; AND

H. THE GOH AND THE ARMED FORCES DECLARE THAT THE CONCILIATORY POSITION THAT THEY HAVE ADOPTED IN THE PAST SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS VACILLATION OR WEAKNESS. THEY ARE DETERMINED TO ADOPT MEASURES TO GUARANTEE TRANQUILLITY WITHOUT INTERFERING WITH THE FUNCTIONING OF THE JUDICIARY.

2. A COMMUNIQUE OF UNC ISSUED AT 2:00 A.M. JUNE 26 STATES THE FOLLOWING:

A. ON JUNE 25 MORE THAN 1,000 CAMPESINOS FROM OLANCHO
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STARTED THEIR PEACEFUL MARCH ON TEGUCIGALPA. AT 9:00 A.M. THE 18TH OF FEBRUARY INSTITUTE (CENTRAL SANTA CLARA) WAS ATTACKED BY ARMY TROOPS AND ARMED LANDOWNERS;

B. AMONG THE GROUP WAS GUILLERMO AYES MEJIA, A SUPERVISOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION ON OLANCHO, WHO TOGETHER WITH OTHER ARMED CIVILIANS UTILIZED SCHOOL CHILDREN AS SHIELDS TO FORCE THEIR WAY INTO THE INSTITUTION;

C. AS A RESULT OF THE ATTACK, FOUR UNC MEMBERS WERE KILLED

AND TWO WOUNDED;

D. UNC REQUESTS THE SOLID SUPPORT OF ALL THE ORGANIZATIONS
OF THE PEOPLE;

D. UNC AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING IT ASSUME THE
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FIGHT AND THIS NEW MASSACRE OF PEACEFUL
PEOPLE WILL NOT GO UNAVENGED BECAUSE "THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS
IS THE SEED OF CHRISTIANS"; AND

F. UNC DEMANDS THAT THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL MAKE AN
IMMEDIATE AND HONEST INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTS IN ORDER TO
PUNISH THE KILLERS. IF THERE IS NO JUSTICE THE ARMED
FORCES WILL BE DISHONORED AND THE PEOPLE WILL RISE UP
AGAINST THEM AND "THEIR DAYS WILL BE NUMBERED".

3. COMMENT: THE CLASH DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF A DECISION ON THE
PART OF UNC TO CARRY OUT A "HUNGER MARCH" ON THE CAPITAL.
PEDRO MENDOZA, THE UNC PRESIDENT, STATED THAT THE PURPOSE
OF THE MARCH WAS TO SPEED THE DISTRIBUTION OF LAND TO
NEEDY CAMPESINOS UNDER THE AGRARIAN REFORM, BRING ABOUT THE
RELEASE OF 22 IMPRISONED CAMPESINOS AND WIN LEGAL RECOGNITION
(PERSONERIA JURIDICA) FROM THE GOVERNMENT. THE MARCH
WAS ANOTHER IN THE RECENT UNC ACTIONS (SEE REFTELS) DESIGNED
TO APPLY PRESSURE TO THE GOVERNMENT.

4. THE VERY THING THAT THE ARMED FORCES WERE
FEARING HAS TAKEN PLACE. THE KILLING OF CAMPESINOS BY
SOLDIERS HAS PLACED THE MILITARY IN A BITTER AND DIFFICULT
POSITION. THERE SEEMS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT
IS FACED WITH A SERIOUS TEST OF ITS ABILITY TO LEAD THE
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COUNTRY. AS POINTED OUT IN PREVIOUS TELEGRAMS, THE TENSIONS
WITHIN THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL WILL PROBABLY LEAD TO AN
INCREASING POLARIZATION OF FORCES AS VARIOUS LT. COLONELS
SEEK TO IMPOSE THEIR WILL AND POLICY VIEWPOINTS.
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